

Forest Plan

Table 1. Existing Forest Plan Management Area Allocations

Forest Plan Prescriptions	Prescription Description	GIS Acres	
		Acres	%
1.11	Pristine Wilderness	131,222	11.9
1.13	Semi-Primitive Wilderness	60676	5.5
1B	Existing and Potential Winter Sports Sites	1217	0.1
2A	Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunities	25455	2.3
2B	Rural and Roaded Natural Recreation Opportunities	19147	1.7
3A	Semi-Primitive Nonmotorized Recreation Opportunities	45775	4.1
3B	Primitive Recreation in Unroaded Areas	33218	3.0
4B	Wildlife Habitat Management for Management Indicator Species	236,270	21.4
4D	Aspen Stand Management	13368	1.2
5A	Wildlife Winter Range in Non-Forested Areas	15433	1.4
5B	Wildlife Winter Range in Forested Areas	12604	1.1
6A	Livestock Grazing, Improve Forage Condition	38672	3.5
6B	Livestock Grazing, Maintain Forage Condition	224,626	20.3
7E	Wood Fiber Production	210,217	19.0
9A	Riparian and Aquatic Ecosystem Management	931 ¹	0.1
9B	Increase Water Yield	3991	0.4
9E	Water Impoundment Sites	64	0.0
10A	Research Natural Areas	1618	0.1
10C	Scenic, Geologic, Historic, and Other Special Interest Areas	150	0.0
10D	Wild and Scenic River Corridors	30326	2.7
Total		1104978	99.8 ²
Non-FS		7450	0.1

Some interpretations from Table 1 include:

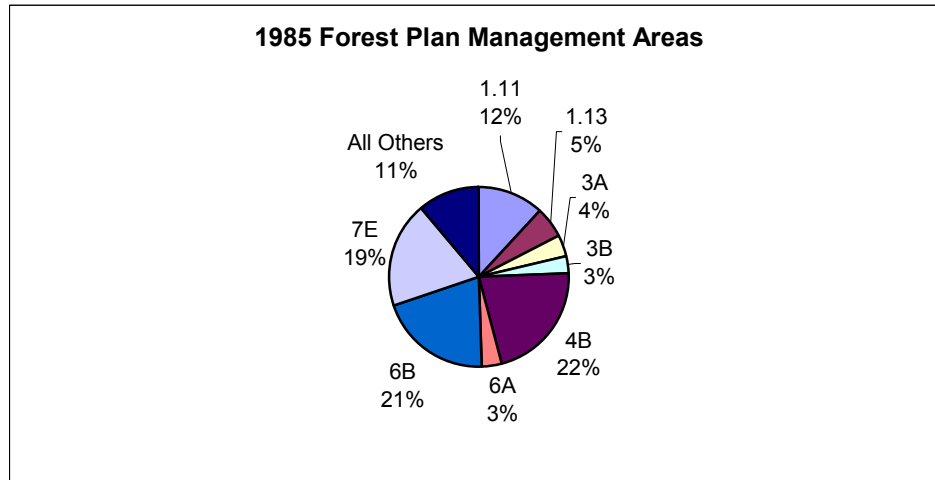
- Commodity emphasis prescriptions of 6* and 7E account for 42.8% of the National Forest.
- Management Indicator Species Management is the single largest allocation, at 21.4% of the Bighorn NF.
- Wilderness accounts for 17.4% of the National Forest.
- These prescriptions (1.11, 1.13, 4B, 6A, 6B and 7E) account for nearly 82% of the forest.
- No other management area accounts for more than 5% of the Bighorn NF.

¹ There are 931 acres of 9A Management Area that is mapped. By definition, there is 105,890 acres, or 9.6% of the Bighorn NF that is in the 9A Management Area.

² Does not total 100% due to rounding.

- 9A, riparian area management, accounts for nearly 10% of the forest. Only 931 acres of the total 9A area is mapped, the rest is by definition.

Figure 2-A. Existing Forest Plan Management Area Allocations



WHAT IS BROKEN AND NEEDS TO BE FIXED IN THE FOREST PLAN?

Goals, Standards, and Guidelines Need Updated:

- Large increase in recreation use levels is not accounted for.
- ATVs, for all intents and purposes, did not exist in 1985. Motorized use from cross-country travel is creating resource damage.
- Wild fire, fuels management and fire ecology goals, standards, and guidelines do not reflect the best science nor increased public awareness.
- New laws, amendments to existing laws, and implementation have come in place since 1985 that need incorporated (e.g. 1988 Cave Management Act; Clean Water Act implementation: Best Management Practices; Heritage law amendments)
- Species management and protection is out-of-date and not in compliance with recent court rulings on species viability implementation, especially for Management Indicator Species (MIS) and rare plants and animals.
- There is no distinction between standards and guidelines in the 1985 plan. This affects how projects are implemented and analysis required.
- Some standards and guidelines are not achievable or measurable, e.g. "Habitat for each species on the forest will be maintained at least at 40% or more of potential".

- The diversity unit³ scale for forested vegetation/habitats analysis and application of standards and guidelines is too small – the natural processes (fires) exceed this size.
- Required silviculture standards/guidelines in the plan do not match regional guidance in manual
- Range goal to “manage riparian areas to reach mid to seral ecological condition” is difficult to measure and is not always desirable.
- Range and timber goals to “...satisfy requirements for local community stability” are not in line with current economic thinking.
- There are range references to stocking rates, reference guides, ‘range conditions’, and dates that are not appropriate or are obsolete.

Management Areas Need Updated:

- Some management areas too small. Creates areas difficult to manage, for example, a 40 acre 4B bisected by Pole Creek Road and within 7E/6B area.
- Some management areas are not being managed according to their prescription (e.g. 7E and suited emphasis in Little Goose, Piney and Rock Creeks; 9B water yield increase is not appropriately applied).
- Municipal watersheds are not recognized in management area allocations.
- Current Plan does not include allocations or standards to provide high quality scenery along the Scenic Byways.

Outputs of Commodity Uses Need Updated – these are Objectives in 1985 Plan:

- Allowable Sale Quantity and grazing objective of providing 144,000 AUMs are not in balance with standards and guidelines and other resource uses.
- Other outputs and time frames are out-of-date and need to be reanalyzed.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Needs Updated:

Monitoring requirements for resources and programs do not address the objectives or reflect the current emphasis or needs for change.

³ Diversity unit is defined in the 1985 Forest Plan as: “A combination of contiguous analysis areas comprising a watershed area of approximately 5000 acres. These units are the intermediate strata used in allocation of management practices.” The natural scale of catastrophic fire exceeds 10,000 acres, with the Lost Fire in 1988 being a recent example.